

Caesar's eulogy

Mark Antony – to the citizens of Rome.
(Act 3 Scene 2)

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest--
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men--
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

A eulogy is a speech made at a funeral about the life of person who has passed away. We tend to remember the good they did, and the less positive side of a person is generally overlooked.

Mark Antony asks to be allowed to give this speech to the citizens of Rome.

1. Why do the conspirators allow Caesar's friend to deliver this speech?
2. Make a list of all the things Mark Antony reminds the citizens that Julius Caesar did.
3. Why does Mark Antony say that Brutus said Caesar had to die?
4. Does Mark Antony agree with Brutus? Highlight the lines that support your view.
5. What is the subtext of this speech?
6. Is Mark Antony portrayed as a persuasive orator? What does this mean?
7. 'The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;'

Explain what these lines might mean.

Imagine that you too are to speak at Caesar's funeral rites. Decide on a role before you begin – will you be another character from the play? What will you say about Caesar? Think about the message you want to put across to the people of Rome. What is your view of Julius Caesar and his assassination?

Prepare your speech carefully and then deliver it to the rest of the class.

For an added challenge why not try writing in iambic pentameter just like Shakespeare?!